What is Claimed:

1. A publishing system including a middleware system, wherein the publishing system includes a repository and server means facilitating editorial services with respect to digital items produced by a plurality of front-end clients, said middleware system comprising a software-based mechanism to create an envelope associated with each item and to thereby provide an object corresponding to each item, each said object being accessible within said publishing system.

2. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said envelope for each item is sufficient to enable the publishing system to manipulate the item.

3. A system as recited in claim 2, wherein said envelope is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object and HTTP is used for its transmission.

4. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and wherein the system includes a mechanism to associate additional metadata with each said item to identify the native format of the item.

5. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the system is operable as a web service, generating a format field and providing standardized (HTTP/XML/SOAP) connections between the publishing system and the front-end clients.

6. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images.

7. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a writing and editing program.

8. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a page design program.

9. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said editorial services provided by the publishing system include item manipulation, management, sizing, layout, and printing.

10. A system as recited in claim 1, further comprising software based mechanism for providing items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in a native format of said front-end clients.

11. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said envelope for each item is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object, and HTTP is used for its transmission; and wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and the system includes a mechanism to associate additional metadata with each said item to identify the native format of the item; and wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images; and further comprising a software based mechanism for providing items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in the native format of said front-end clients.

12. A method for facilitating the interoperability of a publishing system with a plurality of front-end clients, wherein the publishing system includes a repository and a server for providing editorial services with respect to digital items produced by the front-end clients, wherein each digital said item is characterized by a native format, the method comprising the creation of a metadata envelope associated with each item, thereby providing an object corresponding to each item, each said object being accessible within said publishing system.

13. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein said envelope for each item is sufficient to enable the publishing system to manipulate the item.

14. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein said envelope is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object and HTTP is used for its transmission.

15. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and further comprising the provision of additional metadata to be associated with each said item to identify the native format of the item.

16. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the method is performed as a web service, generating a format field and providing standardized (HTTP/XML/SOAP) connections between the publishing system and the front-end clients.

17. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images.

18. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a writing and editing program.

19. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a page design program.

20. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein said editorial services provided by the publishing system include item manipulation, management, sizing, layout, and printing.

21. A method as recited in claim 12, further comprising the provision of items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in a native format of said front-end clients.

22. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein said envelope for each item is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object, and HTTP is used for its transmission; and wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and the method includes a step to associate additional metadata with each said item to identify the native format of the item; and wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images; and further comprising a step for providing items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in the native format of said front-end clients.

23. A computer-readable medium comprising executable instructions for instruction a computer to perform the method recited in claim 12.

24. A computer-readable medium comprising instructions for causing a computer to perform a web service for facilitating the interoperability of a publishing system with a plurality of front-end clients, wherein the publishing system includes a repository and a server for providing editorial services with respect to digital items produced by the front-end clients, wherein each digital said item is characterized by a native format, the web service comprising the creation of a metadata envelope associated with each item, thereby providing an object corresponding to each item, each said object being accessible within said publishing system.

25. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein said envelope for each item is sufficient to enable the publishing system to manipulate the item.

26. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 25, wherein said envelope is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object and HTTP is used for its transmission.

27. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and wherein the system includes a mechanism to associate additional metadata with each said item to identify the native format of the item.

28. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein the system is operable as a web service, generating a format field and providing standardized (HTTP/XML/SOAP) connections between the publishing system and the front-end clients.

29. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images.

30. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a writing and editing program.

31. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein at least one of said front-end clients comprises a page design program.

32. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein said editorial services provided by the publishing system include item manipulation, management, sizing, layout, and printing.

33. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, further comprising software based mechanism for providing items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in a native format of said front-end clients.

34. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 24, wherein said envelope for each item is described in SOAP and XML to define and enable handling of the object, and HTTP is used for its transmission; and wherein each said item is characterized by a native format, and the

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system includes a mechanism to associate additional metadata with each said item to identify the native format of the item; and wherein said items produced by the front-end clients include charts, text, and images; and further comprising a software based mechanism for providing items from the publishing system to the front-end clients in the native format of said front-end clients.